

25 listed criminals

FROM PAGE 1
Sathia Upazila.

The joint forces also arrested 14 listed criminals in Bagerhat, Jessore, Jhenidah and Kusthia and recovered four firearms and ammunition.

Of them, Qari Ashraf, 60, Hafez-e-Qur'an, who runs a criminal gang in Bagharpara Upazila of Jessore, was arrested Monday evening. Ashraf and his cadres have been wanted in about 200 murder cases over the last 25 years.

Earlier, Ashraf and 35 armed cadres surrendered to the police with 22 firearms on behalf of the Gano Mukti Fauj on July 21, 1999, seeking general amnesty.

In Feni, the troops arrested four people including a former union parishad (UP) chairman, Ruhul Amin, in the district. Ruhul Amin was arrested in Fazipur village of Sadar Upazila. Other arrestees are Jafar Islam Tipu, Saquib and Abdul Karim, a Jubo Dal activist.

In Kusthia, the joint forces arrested three persons and recovered a rifle along with ammunition. A team of joint forces raided the house of Motlebur Rahman, headmaster of

the Swashtipur High School in the town. The troops also arrested Jamal Hossain in possession of a rifle.

In another drive, they arrested Raja and Polin Sheikh on charge of extortion from a pharmacy in the city.

In Rajbari, a team of the joint forces rescued a trader a few hours after abduction in Ghatua village in Pangsha yesterday morning. Mithun, 35, was abducted for a ransom of Tk 10,000. Mockbul Hossain, Sarafat Ali, Sabur Khan, Salim Khan, Abul Kalam, Nejan Uddin and Abdul Bari were arrested on charge of abduction.

In a press release, the Police Headquarters yesterday said police arrested 1,464 people, including 13 identified criminals and seized 13 firearms and 95 bullets across the country in the last 24 hours ending at 6:00am yesterday. They also arrested 784 wanted accused and another 663 in other cases.

Meanwhile, the Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP) arrested 318 suspects and 28 wanted criminals.

JCD men on rampage

FROM PAGE 12
save Mesbah Kamal from JCD activists.

Meanwhile, the university authorities have formed a five-member committee to investigate reported harassment of a female student by a teacher. DU Treasurer Prof Syed Rashidul Hasan is convenor of the committee and the proctor is its member-secretary.

Campus sources said that the JCD men during their repeated attacks damaged Mesbah Kamal's office and several rooms of history department.

A number of JCD activists from different residential halls brought out a procession on the campus under the banner of 'general students' at about 11 in the morning. Students of history department chased the procession as it tried to attack the department office.

Later, the JCD men brought out another procession from Madhu's canteen area and moved to history department. Some top leaders of the JCD were seen instigating their activists in the attack.

The activists then burnt an effigy of Mesbah Kamal in front of the Aparajeya Bangla. Then they again attacked the students of history department.

However, Shafiq Bari Babu, Convenor of Dhaka University unit of the JCD, denied involvement of their activists in yesterday's campus violence and said general students of the university protested a teacher's undesirable activities.

Meanwhile, Mesbah Kamal along with the female student reportedly assaulted by him came to The Daily Star office yesterday afternoon and firmly denied the press reports in this regard.

The female student said Mesbah Kamal is completely innocent and the reports on physical harassment

PM in Madina

FROM PAGE 1
Khaleda stayed some time at the VVIP lounge of the airport and exchanged pleasantries with the Saudi officials and the Bangladeshi expatriates.

Earlier, an aircraft of Biman Bangladesh Airlines, with the Prime Minister and her entourage, took off from the Zia International Airport at 11:28am.

State Minister for Civil Aviation and Tourism Mir Mohammad Nasiruddin and Political Secretary to the Prime Minister Mohammad Mosaddek Ali are among those accompanying her.

During her stay in Madina, the Prime Minister will say her prayers at the Masjid-e-Nababi (Prophet's Mosque) and offer fatha at the Rauza Mobarak of Prophet Muhammad.

On Friday, the Prime Minister will go to Makkah and perform Umrah. She will return home on December 4.

AL to boycott

FROM PAGE 1
views on some other bills passed in the House yesterday.

Suranjit Sengupta and Mohammad Nasim explained to newsmen why their party was opposing passage of the Arms (Amendment) Bill, 2002, Explosives Substance (Amendment) Bill, 2002, Narcotics Control (Amendment) Bill, 2002, and the Vested Property Return (Amendment) Bill, 2002.

Criticising the Vested Property Return (Amendment) Bill, Suranjit said the immediate past AL government passed a bill making provision for listing vested properties within 180 days so that those could be returned to their real owners. "But there is no timeframe in the current bill. Moreover, the government is now keeping open the provision for leasing out vested properties, which means the 25 million minority population of Bangladesh would be deprived of their properties for good", he said.

"This amendment has been orchestrated with a malafide attempt to make the relevant law redundant. Through this amendment the Vested Property Act (VPA) has been made clinically dead. This is a manifestation of fundamentalist and communal attitude of the pres-

ent government," Suranjit said.

Criticising the three other amendment bills, Suranjit said, all these are "aimed at repressing political opponents". He feared that after falsely implicating opposition leaders in arms cases, the government would try to disqualify them from contesting in future elections.

Pointing to the provision for completion of investigation within 15 days of arrest of a person with arms, Suranjit said such a deadline will lead to mistakes in charge-framing. He blamed law minister Moudud Ahmed for "destroying the legal system".

Mohammad Nasim came down heavily on the government for passage of the Speedy Trial Tribunal Law. "This will be used as a tool to victimise political opponents".

Nasim was equally critical of the provision of penalty for defaulting investigating officers (IOs). "Moudud would write their (IOs') annual credential report (ACR)", he said.

Senior AL leader Abdus Samad Azad and Opposition Chief Whip Abdus Shahid were present, among others, at the briefing.

Euro-parliament

FROM PAGE 1
one-sided, and it has no relation to the ground realities prevailing in the country following the start of the joint drive to curb crimes in the country that the present government had inherited from the past.

The Foreign Secretary further said Bangladesh does not need a "prescription from anyone outside the country" on the measures needed to improve the law and order in Bangladesh.

He said that the decision of the government was taken in complete consonance with the provision of the constitution of the country and that this is not for the first time that a constitutionally and democratically elected government called out the Armed Forces in aid of civil power.

The Foreign Secretary told the EC Ambassador that the joint drive has found broad acceptance among all segments of the population because it has succeeded in visibly improving the law and order, particularly during the holy month of Ramadan and the ensuing Eid-ul-Fitr.

Chowdhury also said that Bangladesh government has credible evidence that the resolution was the outcome of information fed to the European Parliament by vested quarters bent on damaging the image of the country abroad.

The Foreign Secretary said that given the history of friendly and cooperative relations between the European Union and Bangladesh, it was hoped that this resolution would in no way affect this relation.

Storm

FROM PAGE 1
Deputy Director of Meteorological Department said last night. At 6pm yesterday, the storm was centred at about 740 kms southwest of Chittagong port, 670 kms southwest of Cox's Bazar and 660 kms south-southwest of Mongla port.

Maximum sustained wind speed within 54 kms of the storm centre is about 65 kph, rising up to 85 kph in gusts or squalls. The sea will remain rough.

Maritime ports of Chittagong and Cox's Bazar have been advised to keep hoisted local warning signal number 4 (four).

Maritime port of Mongla has been advised to keep hoisted distant warning signal number 2 (two).

All fishing boats and trawlers over the North Bay have been advised to take shelter immediately.

Meanwhile our Cox's Bazar correspondent adds that rainfall continuing till writing this report throughout the district as an impact of the cyclonic storms which paralysed the normal life of the district. Local met office recorded 50-mm rainfall today. Fishing in the Bay hampered due to rough sea.

Panic gripped on about seven lakhs of coastal people of Moheskhal, Kutubdia, Ukhia, Sadar, Teknaf and Chokoria upazilas under Cox's Bazar district after hearing the formation of cyclone in the Bay of Bengal on Monday night.

According to the Cyclone Preparedness Programme (CPP) sources 4428 volunteers of CPP now under alert in the district to face the cyclone. Cox's Bazar district administration held an emergency meeting at 2 pm today to face any possible disaster situation, which was presided over by the Deputy Commissioner (DC).

The DC directed the local authorities to open all 4500 cyclone shelters of the district.

Shaheed Milon

FROM PAGE 12
sacrifice made by him would ever remain a source of inspiration to the people.

Different organisations have taken up programmes to mark the day.

Shaheed Dr Milon Sangsad has brought out a commemorative publication titled 'Miloner Mukh' (Milon's face). Its programmes include placing of wreaths at Milon's grave on the Dhaka Medical College premises and at the memorial near the TSC in the morning and a discussion meeting at the TSC at 3:00 pm.

The BMA will hold a discussion meeting on the Dhaka Medical College premises at 10 am. Minister for Local Government and Rural Development Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan will be the chief guest.

Bangladesh Awami League will place wreath at the grave of the martyr at 10 am.

Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal (JSD) will hold a discussion meeting at Col. Taher Auditorium at 11:30 am to mark the day.

Abul Hasan Chy

FROM PAGE 1
set up a meeting with the visiting Pakistani president, the party high command overruled the instructions. The former state minister felt that established diplomatic norms should be followed in foreign affairs.

During Mosharraf's visit, Hasina was in the USA and Samad Azad was acting president of the AL.

Samad Azad then explained that the AL cancelled the meeting as many party leaders were against it on the ground that Mosharraf was not an elected president.

Azad also resented Chowdhury's press statement.

Foreign journalists remanded

FROM PAGE 1
tourist visas. All the three were extensively interrogated before they were brought to the capital early yesterday morning.

Police also seized from the journalists passports, a video camera, 10 videocassettes and some other documents. Police kept them at the Detective Branch (DB) headquarters at Minto Road in the city before producing them before the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's (CMM) Court, Dhaka at about 1:30pm.

Additional police forces were deployed at the court premises from early morning to avoid any untoward incident. Tight security was there at the courtroom during the hearing.

Police prayed to the court for a 10-day remand for each of them. DB inspector Mizanur Rahman told the court that the two journalists had flown in on Zia International Airport (ZIA) on November 6 concealing their professions and real identities.

"They showed fake ID cards to the immigration officials on arrival at ZIA. They interviewed and took video footage of one Habibur Rahman at the North Gate of Baitul Mokarram on November 15," he further informed.

Before leaving Dhaka for Chittagong, Rahman continued, the two journalists also recorded statements of several people and took footages of the Baitul Mokarram National Mosque.

They also gathered information about the mosques and madrassahs in Dhaka.

The DB inspector further informed the court that Sorrentino and Zaiba Malik left Dhaka for Chittagong on November 18 and stayed at Faisal Hotel. During their stay, they went to the residence of slain college principal Gopal Krishna Muhuri, talked to his family members and relatives, and recorded their statements. They also exchanged views with a Chittagong correspondent of the Daily Janakantha.

He said, "The two journalists and their local guide also visited Cox's Bazar, Kutubkhali of Ukhia and Manikchhari of Khagrachhari and collected various information."

"They also met some religious devotees of the areas and recorded their information tactfully. Their motive was to give a distorted image of the present political, social and religious situation of Bangladesh and to portray the religious devotees as fundamentalists like the Taliban and Al-Qaida to the foreign media."

The DB inspector added that the local guide Moniza Pricilla Raj worked as an interpreter for the foreign journalists and helped them gather all the information. The

arrival and activities of the two journalists were mysterious, he also said.

Defence counsels Barrister Rokon Uddin Mahmud and advocate Khondakar Abdul Mannan submitted two separate petitions seeking bail and cancellation of the remand prayer of the police for the three arrestees.

They submitted another petition seeking relevant documents of the case and asking for allowing the arrestees to sign the Vokalatnama. The counsels alleged that police did not allow them to see the First Information Report and the forwarding report of the case. "Even police did not allow us to take signature of the arrestees on the Vokalatnama," Barrister Mahmud said.

The defence lawyers also stated that the foreign journalists came to the country as tourists and they had no evil motive. "They came here to visit various historical places. The prosecution did not produce documents showing reasons for their arrest," Barrister Mahmud added.

He further said some officials of British and Italian embassies came to the court to see their nationals which means that the journalists are not involved in any such evil design. He also said Pricilla is a local NGO activist and she worked for the two journalists on a daily basis.

British-born Zaiba Naz Malik told the court that they never went to the residence of slain college principal Muhuri. "We came to know about him through newspapers," she added.

When the defence lawyers prayed to the court to grant the arrestees bail and set aside the remand prayer of the police, Court Inspector Abdus Sobhan opposed both. He argued that the arrestees were involved in anti-state activities and trying to project Bangladesh as a Taliban state.

On hearing both sides, Magistrate Khankadar Atiar Rahman rejected the bail petition and placed the each of three on a five-day remand. The magistrate also directed the police to allow the defence lawyers to see the FIR and forwarding reports, and provide them with all the documents.

Sources said the three were being questioned at the DB headquarters. Police yesterday sent letters to British and Italian missions in Dhaka to know their true identity.

Talking to the journalists, Italian Sorrentino said, "We are innocent. We are freelance journalists. We are not even allowed to talk to our consulate. This is totally wrong and a violation of international norms."

Zaiba Malik urged the journalists to inform her consulate office in Dhaka. "Please inform our consulate offices, the British and Italian

embassies. We are being denied of legal aid."

Pricilla said she worked as interpreter for them only for two days. Replying to a question, she said, "I do not know why they hid their identities. The court will determine what wrongdoing they did. But what wrongdoing have I done?"

Earlier on Monday, one Didarul Islam of North Airport Road in the city filed a seditious case against four persons including the two foreign journalists and their local guide with the Motijheel Police Station. The other accused is Saleem Samad, a freelance journalist and country representative of the Reporters sans Frontiers (RSF). Saleem is absconding.

When reached over telephone last night, Saleem told The Daily Star that he was implicated in the case as part of a conspiracy. "The rightist group in the ruling party has been conspiring against me for long since I am the country representative of the Reporters sans Frontiers (RSF) and is highlighting the rights of local journalists through my writings."

"Disturbed by my activities, the rightist group is trying to portray me to the government as an anti-state agent," he alleged.

Our Khulna correspondent reported that two local journalists representing two Dhaka-based Bangla national dailies accompanied the two foreign journalists in Khulna.

Sources said the two foreign journalists visited the Bagerhat district, gathered information and took photographs of the members of the religious minority.

A Channel 4 spokesperson told Reuters in London yesterday that Malik was a producer/cameraman and Sorrentino a director/reporter and that both were experienced journalists.

"We are very concerned about the situation," the spokesman said.

Buriganga

FROM PAGE 1
structures. Deputy Director of the BIWTA Saiful Haque Khan informed The Daily Star that the drive will restart after Eid.

Yesterday, the BIWTA drive focused on Mandail and Barisur villages in Keraniganj. The team equipped with three tugboats pulled down at least 30 residential houses along the foreshore. They destroyed 10 more structures, which were knocked down during the first phase of the demolition drive only to be erected again.

The bumpy reality

FROM PAGE 12

The experts said since the condition of the roads has been pitiable for last few years, repairs will take more times this year.

The DCC which is there to take care of city roads has failed to address the problem due to lack of prompt initiatives and funds, said the sources.

After taking over office, city Mayor Sadeque Hossain Khoka initiated a massive road development project worth over Tk 93 crore. But the initiative has fallen through due to a big scam in tender bidding for the works.

Moreover, another tender of the mechanical engineering division of the DCC for bitumen carpeting of the main roads has also become uncertain due to widespread allegations of tender manipulation.

The five-member probe committee has submitted its report on the alleged scam on Saturday to the Local Government and Rural Development (LGRD) secretary. The report recommended cancella-

tion of tender in eight of the ten zones of the DCC. Now, if the recommendations are implemented, the Tk 93 crore road development work would further be delayed.

Sources said during the 2000-2001 fiscal the DCC conducted road development works only on 42kms of the total road network. It conducted some emergency maintenance works on some designated VIP roads like Gulshan, Banani and Dhanmondi under the DUTP (Dhaka Urban Transport Project) funded by the World Bank.

Under the project, the DCC conducted some bitumen carpeting worth about Tk 40 crore during the last fiscal. But the quality of work was very poor, RHD officials said.

Earlier the DCC got the works for repairs and construction of the city's 300km of main and connecting roads worth about Tk 300 crore, but it could complete no more than 20 per cent of the total works in the last fiscal, said the DCC sources.

The slow pace of work prompted a DUTP review committee of the World Bank to threaten the govern-

ment to withdraw the financial support unless it re-designated the works to a competent organisation. Finally, the government gave the job to the RHD. The RHD took over from the DCC to carry out road development works worth about Tk 200 crore.

Top officials of the RHD told The Daily Star that they had already approved work order of two contracts to start road development works under this project and that others would be finalised very soon.

Mohammad Hossain, the superintendent engineer of Circle-1 of the engineering department of the DCC told The Daily Star that until the mayor makes a decision on the report of investigation into the alleged tender manipulation the DCC cannot proceed with the road development works.

He further said the DCC is now working on some pending repairs and development works in some parts of the city that were supposed to be complete in the last fiscal.

Call for new action plan for education

City seminar expresses concern over quality downside

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a discussion yesterday expressed concern over sagging standard of education standard and asked the authorities concerned should detect the pitfalls and drawbacks of the National Action Plan-1 (NPA).

They were participating in a seminar, titled Engendering National Plan of Action II for Education For All (NPA-FFA), organised by the Campaign for Popular Education (CAMPE) and the Women for Women in cooperation with the Royal Netherlands Embassy and the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), Bangladesh.

Nurul Islam Khan, NPA-EFA consultant for primary and mass education department, presented the NPA draft.

Professor Rehman Sobhan, chairman of the Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD) who was chief guest at the seminar, identified the structural weaknesses responsible for the failure of the NPA.

He called upon the non-governmental organisations (NGOs) to establish 600 schools of quality education and asked donors to mobilise grants to construct toilets for female students so that their attendance may increase.

Mahfuz Anam, editor of The Daily Star, who attended the seminar as a special guest, expressed his frustration over the deterioration of the quality of education.

He said lack of qualified teachers and teachers' training is one of the reasons for the decrease in education standard.

He also said one should look into

the NPA-1 and find out why it failed to yield to better results before adopting another action plan.

The Daily Star editor mentioned he would take measures to bring out an education page in his daily to work as catalyst towards quality education.

He suggested forming an advocacy group comprising educationists and media people for creating a positive rapport in the society.

Nurul Islam said the NPA-1 aimed at establishing a knowledge-based and technology-oriented learning society for all.

Islam proposed the establishment of a reliable and verifiable database with Management Information System (MIS) and Geographic Information System (GIS) interfacing with the non-formal sub-systems, both in the public and NGO streams.

He suggested providing adequate facilities, including separate and well-maintained toilet facilities for girls and boys and revising and updating curriculum keeping in mind the new technology era with its information superhighway.

Islam also underscored the need for making textbooks available in time to all children.

Organised at the LGED Bhaban, more than 150 participants, working mostly in the education sector, participated in the daylong seminar.

Rasheda K Chowdhury, director of CAMPE, Roushan Jahan, former president of Women for Women and Hamida Akhter Begum, president of Women for Women also spoke at the inaugural session of the seminar.

4 laws amended

FROM PAGE 12
An IO will get another seven days if he/she fails to complete investigation within the specified period.

If investigation is not completed even within the extended time, the court may change the IO and the new officer must complete investigation within seven working days if the offender is caught red-handed and 30 working days in other cases.

Whatever the case may be, the IO must report in writing to his/her controlling officer as well as the court about the reasons for delay.

Failure to complete investigation in specified time would be regarded as inefficiency on the part of an IO and would be recorded in his/her annual confidential record. Departmental action might also be taken against such inefficiency.

"Quick investigation into criminal charges involving illegal arms, explosive and narcotics has become imperative to make speedy trial tribunals effective," the law minister told the House.

Changes to the Vested Property Return Act, approved by the parliament, will allow the government indefinite time to list returnable vested properties and the deputy commissioners to lease such properties out until those are returned to the owners.

The original law provided a 180-day time limit for the government to announce a district-wise list of

Bookworms

FROM PAGE 10
issues of magazines and journals for 7 to 14 days and the audio-video cassettes and CD-ROM for one week.

The computer in the library is fully dedicated for CD-ROM use, Internet browsing or other purposes.

The library also provided the printing facilities, scanning and CD writing facilities.

The students can be member of the library from the first day of the semester.

They can borrow two books at a time. Each book is issued for five days and renewed for three days. They also get the borrowing facilities of audiovisual materials for three days, photocopy services (only the restricted library materials), computerised cataloguing system, scanning and CD writing facilities and contents page service of the subscribed journals (through the e-mail to all the users).

The IUB library, Chittagong has link with the IUB library, Dhaka and has the opportunity of resource sharing with that. Both the libraries also share books, journals, magazines, audio-visual materials, software and manpower.

The library also facing some problems including non-availability of original books, foreign books and journals. The suppliers of books are not active in Chittagong. For lack of supplying of desired books in time, there are crises of books, library sources said.

The IUB library in Chittagong has facility of part-time jobs for the full time students on the university premises during class breaks. The library started employing students from Autumn 2000. There are two categories of jobs in the library. One is the safekeeping -- the job is at the circulation. Twenty students are employed each semester, the highest number in IUB, Chittagong.

returnable vested properties.

"We need time so that we can do the job (return of vested properties) properly," the land minister said. "The Awami League government made the law ahead of the general election with a bad intention."

About the authority of the DCs, he said it would save vested properties from being grabbed.

GM Quader and Hafizuddin Ahmed of the Jatiya Party and Quader Siddiqui of the Krishak Samik Janata League opposed the changes, arguing the new provision would ultimately make return of vested properties uncertain.

The House rejected their objections and also their suggestions on amendments to three other laws.

Hasina, Vajpayee

FROM PAGE 12
Yashwant Sinha on bilateral issues.

Sinha hosted a dinner in her honour at the historic Hyderabad State Guesthouse. Senior Indian leaders, Ministers, MPs, intellectuals, Columnists and senior officials attended the dinner.

Among the invitees were former Indian PM IK Gujral, Ajit Kumar Panja MP, State Minister Basundhara Rajee, noted columnist Indor Kumar Malhotra, Prof. SD Muni, former Foreign Secretaries Erik Gonsalvez, Muskunda Dube, IP Khosla, N.N. Vora, Dev Mukherjee, Rajiv Secree, Sri Shasanka, Nolin Suri and Pinak R Chakrabarty.

Eid in Chittagong

FROM PAGE 10
cards are now distributed all over the world. And, all major newspapers and weeklies, following the Durga Puja tradition in Kolkata, bring out Eid supplements of real mammoth size. This year, Jugantar, a popular daily, has already released in the market its Eid volume consisting of over 500 pages. A weekly, namely 2000, has published its Eid volume in which as many as 16 novels are accommodated. Bravo. Thus, for many writers, writing novels for the Eid volumes should become a yearlong preoccupation.

And the world of fashions has been caught up with feverish changes overnight. Enterprising and creative women have launched shops decked with ladies draperies of the latest fashion and designs. The sari merchants don't lag behind either. Saris of all qualities and prices flooding the market just dazzle the eyes. In the world of perfumes, the word 'brand' is the catchword. Anything you buy, if it does not have a brand name like the YLS or Poison, yours will be considered cheap. The same applies to men's wearing. A brand shirt may cost you something between Tk 2000 and Tk 4000, and the fake one bearing